

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Guidance
Michigan Department of Transportation
Bureau of Passenger Transportation
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The Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Bureau of Passenger Transportation is providing this information to assist transit agencies in development of their Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. We have included both federal requirements and MDOT guidance for plan development.

Coordinated Plan Overview

The Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires that projects selected for funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310); the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316); and the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The plan is to be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit and human services transportation providers and participation by the public.

Plan Participants

While the plan is only required in communities seeking funding under one or more of the three specified Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs, FTA expects public transit systems funded under both the Section 5307 and Section 5311 formula programs to participate in the local planning process for coordinated public transit-human service transportation in those areas applying for funds under Sections 5310, 5316, or 5317.

To the extent feasible other transportation providers, advocacy groups, human service agencies, and passengers are encouraged to participate and coordinate with recipients of FTA assistance for New Freedom, Job Access and Reverse Commute, and the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) programs in the planning for and delivery of special transportation services.

FTA also encourages the inclusion of intercity bus mobility needs in the coordinated planning process.

Plan Definition

A locally developed, coordinated, public transit-human services transportation plan identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. A coordinated plan

should also incorporate activities offered under other transportation programs sponsored by Federal, State, and Local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.

Lead Agency

Each county or region needs to determine which agency will have the lead for the development and coordination of the planning process. The lead agency may be different from the agency that will serve as the designated recipient in urbanized areas. MDOT strongly encourages the public transit provider, or the Section 5310 recipient in counties that do not have a public transit agency, to act as the lead agency for development of this coordination plan. In the large urbanized areas of the state, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will also be involved.

Required Coordinated Plan Elements

The following elements at a level consistent with available resources and the complexity of the local institutional environment are required for the coordination plan and must be submitted to MDOT:

1. Description of outreach showing a good faith effort to get participation from the identified stakeholders. Please include a list of identified stakeholders and their level of participation.
2. An assessment of available services that identifies current providers (public, private, and nonprofit);
3. An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment may be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service (Note: If a community does not intend to seek funding for a particular program, (Section 5310, JARC, or New Freedom), then the community is not required to include an assessment of the targeted population in its coordinated plan.);
4. Strategies and/or activities to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
5. Priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies/activities identified.
6. Describe the plan adoption process – who was involved, what was approved, how it was approved, etc.

Planning Process

Identify Stakeholders

Outreach is a very important aspect of the process. Every effort should be made to get broad participation in the coordination process. It would be a good idea to start with the membership of your Local Advisory Council or Coordination Committee. However, based on the participant listing below, additional agencies and/or individuals will need to be added to either of these groups to meet the intent of the coordinated plan process. Consideration should be given to including groups and organizations such as the following in the coordinated planning process if present in the community:

(1) Transportation partners:

- (a) Area transportation planning agencies, including MPOs, States, and local governments;
- (b) Public transportation providers (including ADA paratransit providers and agencies administering the projects funded under the FTA urbanized and non-urbanized programs);
- (c) Private transportation providers, including private transportation brokers, taxi operators, vanpool providers, and intercity bus operators;
- (d) Non-profit transportation providers;
- (e) Past or current organizations funded under the JARC, the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, and/or the New Freedom programs; and
- (f) Human service agencies funding, operating, and/or providing access to transportation services.

(2) Passengers and advocates (Note: Inclusion of this group has been emphasized by FTA):

- (a) Existing and potential riders, including both general and targeted population passengers (individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes);
- (b) Protection and advocacy organizations;
- (c) Representatives from independent living centers; and
- (d) Advocacy organizations working on behalf of targeted populations.

(3) Human service partners:

- (a) Agencies that administer health, employment, or other support programs for targeted populations. Examples of such agencies include but are not limited to Departments of Social/Human Services, Employment One-Stop Services; Vocational Rehabilitation, Medicaid, Community Action Programs, Agency on Aging; Developmental Disability Council, Community Services Board;

- (b) Non-profit human service provider organizations that serve the targeted populations;
- (c) Job training and placement agencies;
- (d) Housing agencies;
- (e) Health care facilities; and
- (f) Mental health providers.

(4) Others:

- (a) Security and emergency management agencies;
- (b) Tribes and tribal representatives;
- (c) Economic development organizations;
- (d) Faith-based and community-based organizations;
- (e) Representatives of the business community (e.g. employers);
- (f) Appropriate local or State officials and elected officials;
- (g) School districts; and
- (h) Policy analysts or experts.

Please note that the required participants include not only transportation providers but also providers of human services, and members of the public (e.g., individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low incomes) who can provide insights into local transportation needs. It is important that stakeholders be included in the development and implementation of the local coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. Please invite the MDOT project manager to your initial meeting (they will attend if possible).

Development of Outreach Plan

Participants in your planning process will include the groups and organizations you have identified from the list above. As described under “Planning Process,” MDOT recommends you conduct one or more meetings/workshops and perform some data gathering activities to complete your plan. However, you may also need additional methods to involve your participants.

You will need to develop an outreach plan to make contact with your participants. At a minimum you will need to develop a mailing list to invite your participants to your meeting(s)/workshop(s) and to solicit information from them. You should also strive to ensure everyone in your area is aware of the planning process and has the opportunity to participate. You may want to use the following outreach strategies to make others aware of the planning process and to inform them of how they can get involved.

- Notice or flyers in centers of community activities
- Newspaper or radio announcements
- Articles in local newsletters or newspapers
- Web postings

In addition to participating in the meeting(s)/workshop(s) other methods should be made available for people to participate, such as sending in ideas or information by letter or reviewing and providing comments on the draft plan. Attachment 1 includes a sample meeting/workshop invitation letter. You can excerpt information from this letter and use it to produce a flyer, a newspaper notice and or a posting on your website. Just add information about how the public can get involved – i.e., attend the meeting, sending in ideas by letter or requesting a copy of the draft plan to review.

Please remember that not all potential participants have access to the Internet and you should not rely exclusively on electronic communications to provide information or to seek comments.

Track and Document Participation

Keep track of individuals that have RSVP'ed for the meetings/workshops or that have opted to provide input through other methods. Communities will have different types of participants depending on population and size of community, geographic location, and services provided at the local level. If groups or individuals that you had identified as stakeholders in the planning are not participating, you should make contact by telephone to reach out and encourage participation in the plan. Participation may remain low, however be sure you have made a good faith effort to involve passengers, representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and others.

The lead agency convening the coordinated planning process should document the efforts they utilized, including keeping a log showing to whom and when letters were sent out and what replies were received if any. FTA further proposes that recipients demonstrate a good faith effort to reach out to specific targeted partners by maintaining copies of notices, newspaper ads, letters, etc., to document their outreach efforts. Federal guidance on participation in the planning process emphasizes: (1) Ensuring adequate outreach efforts; (2) recognition of outreach efforts; and (3) participation from non-DOT funded partner agencies and organizations.

Meeting/Workshop Arrangements

Any public meetings regarding the plan should be held in a location and time where accessible transportation services can be made available and adequately advertised to the general public using techniques such as those listed above. Additionally, interpreters for individuals with hearing impairments and English as a second language and accessible formats (e.g., large print, Braille, electronic versions) should be provided as required by law.

Pre-Meeting Data Collection

Your meeting/workshop participants, in particular service providers, will be an important source of information for your plan. Therefore, MDOT recommends you solicit specific information from your participants prior to the meeting/workshop. An example

“information sheet” of the information you should solicit from each participant prior to the meeting/workshop is included with the sample invitation letter in Attachment 1.

Developing Plan Content

Planning Meeting/Workshop

See Attachment 1 for a sample meeting/workshop invitation letter and participant information sheet.

Be sure you provide adequate lead time for this mailing – remember you want people to provide you information prior to the meeting/workshop that you will need to compile.

SAMPLE FIRST MEETING/WORKSHOP AGENDA

1. Introductions, Purpose of Meeting/Workshop
2. Coordinated Plan Requirements
3. How Stakeholders Were Notified
4. Assessment of Available Services
5. Transportation Services That Are Doing Well
6. Assessment of Transportation Needs
7. Transportation Services We Need to do Better
8. Identify Gaps
9. Develop Strategies to Address the Gaps
10. Develop Priorities for Implementation Based on Resources, Time, and Feasibility
11. Put Coordination Plan Together

It is expected that planning participants will have an active role in the development, adoption, and implementation of the plan, so your meeting/workshop should be structured to ensure their active participation. Consult the United We Ride Framework for Action: Facilitators Guide for tips on how to conduct the meeting.

An Assessment of Available Services (Element 2)

Prior to the meeting/workshop, compile the information about existing services that you received from the information sheets sent in by stakeholders. Provide copies at the meeting/workshop and review the materials to ensure it is complete. Be sure the information shows all service that is being provided, highlights the things that are being

done well, and helps you see where there is duplication and gaps. If the information is incomplete, you may need to take additional efforts after the meeting/workshop to collect the information.

This information will result in an “Assessment of Available Services” which is one of the required elements of your plan (Element 2). See Attachment 2 for a Sample Assessment of Available Services.

An Assessment of Transportation Needs (for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes) (Element 3)

Prior to the meeting/workshop, compile the information about needs that you received from the information sheets sent in by stakeholders. Provide copies at the meeting/workshop and use the information to have an active discussion about transportation needs. Use the professional and personal experience of the people attending the meeting/workshop to develop a comprehensive list of needs. Discuss/determine if there are common origins and destinations that people requiring transportation services need. Also determine if there are any existing planning documents that address transportation mobility issues these should be made available at the meeting/workshop.

If you had made an initial decision to have the plan only focus on the needs of one or two of the targeted population groups, you may receive feedback at the meeting/workshop that the plan should be expanded to address all three targeted population groups.

It is likely that meeting/workshop participants may decide that additional information should be gathered regarding needs. For example, they may decide that a survey of existing transportation users should be completed to obtain further information regarding existing service and unmet transportation needs. If the need information is incomplete (or if you are missing key stakeholders at the meeting/workshop), you may need to take additional efforts after the meeting/workshop to collect the information.

Once you have compiled all the information on needs you will use it to prepare an “Assessment of Transportation Needs, which is a required element of your plan (Element 3). See Attachment 3 for a sample assessment of transportation needs.

Strategies and/or Activities to Address the Identified Gaps (Element 4)

One of the primary goals of your meeting/workshop will be to prepare a list of strategies or activities that will address gaps in service. It is recommended you compile an initial list prior to the meeting/workshop to initiate discussion. See Attachment 4 for a sample listing of strategies and/or activities to address identified gaps in service. Customize this list to be reflective of your area and hand it out at the meeting/workshop. The final list you prepare at the meeting/workshop will be included as one of the elements of the plan.

Priorities for Implementation Based on Resources, Time, and Feasibility (Element 5)

Engage the group in a discussion to prioritize the strategies and/or activities above. Classify each strategy or activity as a high, medium, or low priority. Establish timelines and action steps for high priority strategies and assign the responsibility for carrying them out. Some strategies may be immediate (something you implement right away) and therefore are more detailed; others may be ideas that need more thought or development.

Remember, agencies that intend to apply to MDOT (or a large urban transit agency) for funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310); the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316); and the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) have to show that their application was derived from this plan. Therefore, the high priority strategies should clearly support any intended funding applications.

Writing and Updating Your Plan

At the close of your meeting/workshop, you should have a good beginning on your plan content.

The meeting/workshop participants should determine the following:

- What additional data gathering is needed to complete the plan?
- Who is responsible for that data gathering?
- Are additional meetings/workshops needed?
- Who is responsible for writing the plan?
- What will the process be for review and comment on the draft plan?
 - By meeting/workshop participants
 - By Others
- What is the timeline for submitting the plan to MDOT?
- What will the process be for adopting the plan?
- How often will the plan be updated?
- What will the process be for updating the plan?
- How will implementation of the plan be monitored?

Remember – coordination is an ongoing process – it does not end with the plan. You may want to form a smaller, permanent implementation group to oversee plan activities as they progress.

You must submit to MDOT the Required Coordinated Plan Elements listed on Page 2 of this document.

ATTACHMENT 1

Sample Meeting/workshop Invitation Letter

Date of Letter

You are invited to participate in a meeting/workshop to identify the human service transportation needs of Midville County. The meeting/workshop will be held on date of meeting, time of meeting, place of meeting. Please RSVP to: *(insert name and contact information of person to RSVP to)*.

The Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires that projects selected for funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310); the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316); and/or the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, and that the plan be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit and human services transportation providers and participation by the public.

*Insert a paragraph describing why this plan is important to your community, such as – it is **required** for your agency to apply for federal and state funds to continue existing transportation to work services your agency is providing (describe them briefly)... or it will allow you to make application for new federal funds for new or expanded transportation services aimed at low income individuals and/or persons with disabilities... or it is **required** for your agency to apply for federal and state funds to replace vehicles currently be used by For services aimed at persons with disabilities and the elderly.*

In addition to making us eligible to apply for federal and state funds, coordinated planning is important to our community on a long term basis. Remember the old adage, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts?” The effect of a coordinated system multiplies the service provided by individual providers. There are unmet transportation needs in all communities that we should be working together to meet. Repeated studies identify the lack of transportation as among the top obstacles to employment and full participation in community life for older adults, persons with disability, low income families and others. Coordination is the best way to stretch scare transportation resources and improve mobility for everyone.

You have been identified as a provider of transportation or someone interested in transportation issues for people living in the county. We are inviting you to participate

in a meeting/workshop to develop a plan to identify the transportation needs of the county and to help improve services.

To facilitate discussion at the meeting/workshop, we would like to gather some information prior to the meeting/workshop. Part of the process is an assessment or inventory of available services in the county. Please complete the attached information sheet regarding any transportation services you provide. The plan will also identify transportation needs in the county and develop priorities to address the needs. Please provide an explanation of any needs and ideas to address these needs. The information sheets are due on (*insert date that sheets should be returned by*).

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting/workshop.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: Information Sheet

Coordinated Plan – Stakeholder Information Sheet

Please complete this sheet and submit it to <i>(insert name and address)</i> by <i>(insert due date)</i> :
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Name of Person/Agency:

For Service Providers:

Service Area:

Type of Service (DR, Fixed Route, Vanpool, etc):

Customers: (Elderly, Disabled, General Public, etc.):

Trip Purpose(s): (Employment, Shopping, Medical, etc.):

Funding Sources: (5310, 5307, 5311, Non FTA, Specialized Services, etc.):

Fares:

Service Hours:

Miles per year:

Trips per year:

Hours per year:

List of Vehicles (include size, lifts, etc.)

For all Stakeholders:

What do you see as the public transportation needs in our area, specifically the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low income?

What do you see as the priority actions/strategies we must take to address these needs:

ATTACHMENT 2

Sample Assessment of Current Services

The total county population, according to the 2000 US Census, is 100,000. The following table provides an indication of the number of transportation disadvantaged persons in Midville County.

TABLE I

Transportation Disadvantaged Population, Midville County

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Elderly (age 65 and over)	12,000	12
Persons with Disabilities	4,000	4
Unemployed Individuals	5,000	5
Households with incomes below poverty level	3,000	10
Households with no automobile available	1,500	5

Source: U.S. CENSUS OF POPULATION, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Of the total county population, 40,000 (40 percent) persons reside in urban places greater than 7,500, and 60,000 (60 percent) reside in rural areas. The city of Midville (population 30,000) is the seat of county government and houses the majority of retail businesses, health care facilities, governmental services, human service agencies, and employers in Midville County. Many elderly persons and persons with disabilities reside in isolated rural areas of the county. The lack of mobility has prevented significant numbers of these individuals from obtaining essential goods and services. 1,500, or 50 percent of the households with incomes below the poverty level also live in the rural areas of the county. 4,000, or 80 percent of unemployed individuals live in the rural area or can't find transportation to go to and from jobs in the city. The great majority of travel demand is, therefore, for service from rural outlying county areas to the city of Midville. There also exists a need, however, to transport persons to senior citizen nutrition program meal sites in the smaller communities of Normal, Parker, and Williams.¹ Demand also exists for social and recreational group outings to various county locations. Proposed additions to the Midville Community Hospital in the city of Midville include

¹ See accompanying location map.

plans to add a physical therapy/rehabilitation unit which is expected to generate additional travel demand from out-county areas.

Cooper Tire Company is going to build a manufacturing plant in the city that will employ 450 people.

Existing Transit Services

The city of Midville has had public transportation since November 1976 when a public demand-responsive (door-to-door) service was initiated. The Midville Transit System provides service to city residents with a fleet of five 8 to 12 passenger small buses, three of which are equipped to accommodate wheelchair users. This system has provided city residents a high level of public transportation service. It operates seven days a week during the following hours:

Monday - Friday	6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Saturday - Sunday	7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Its fare structure is \$1.50 for adults and students, and 75 cents for the elderly or persons with disabilities and children under 12 years.

The Salvation Army has two 5310 vehicles, one station wagon and one 8 passenger van, which are used in support of that agency's programs. The vehicles are driven by volunteers with no charge to the passenger. The transportation provided by the Salvation Army program is on an "as-needed" basis and is not regularly scheduled. Most trips occur within the City of Midville.

The Midville County Council on Aging has two Section 5310 lift-equipped small buses. These vehicles are used mainly for trips within the city.

Many times the Salvation Army and the Council on Aging vehicles travel to the same places when they take their clients for medical appointments and other things.

At present, no transit services are available in any area of the county outside of the City of Midville.

ATTACHMENT 3

Sample Assessment of Transportation Needs

There is a demonstrated need for transportation service in rural portions of Midville County to accommodate elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and low income individuals. The use of volunteer drivers, reimbursed for driving their own vehicles, has been considered to help in the transportation of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. There is not a sufficient number of these drivers to meet existing needs, nor is such a practice deemed sufficiently reliable to provide the needed level of service. Volunteer drivers do not have accessible vehicles that would be needed for people with disabilities.

There is also a great need for reliable transportation for low income individuals seeking employment in the city, especially with the opening of the new tire manufacturing plant. The service provided for employment will have to include late hours and weekends to accommodate different shifts at the plant. The plant has agreed to help defray the cost of some of the services provided.

By identifying the unmet needs of the county, stakeholders were able to ascertain the services that are most appropriate and useful to provide access to the community. In light of the unmet needs, an array of service alternatives to accommodate varying transportation needs of the area was considered.

ATTACHMENT 4

Sample Listing of Strategies and/or Activities to Address Identified Gaps.

- Coordinated effort to inform the public of all transportation alternatives in the county.
- Explore ways that the Midville Transit System can expand its service to start providing service outside the city. One suggestion was for the transit system to become a county wide transit authority.
- Fixed routes going from the city and back to bring people in for jobs and services.
- Coordinating all scheduling and dispatching functions under the transit system to eliminate duplication of service.
- Provide demand response service outside of the city.
- Provide transportation to jobs in the city, especially to the new tire manufacturing plant.
- Coordinate scheduling with tire manufacturing plant.
- Provide better coordination of 5310 vehicles to avoid duplication of service.
- Purchase more vehicles.
- Employer vanpool services.